

Seven Hills Charter Public School

- Dec 12-13: ELA and Math SBA testing grades 4-8
- Dec 13: Parent Guild Meeting 4pm in the gym
- Dec 12-18: SHCPS Friendly's Restaurant Fundraiser
- Dec 14: Holiday Bazaar-snow date 12/15/11

- Dec 16: \$1.00 Parent Guild DDD, JA Black and White Dance (Buy your tickets now for only \$6)
- Dec 19: All School Multicultural Celebration
- Dec 22-Jan 3: No School

Dear Families,

It's that time again! Students in grades 4-8 will take their first SBA (Standards Based Assessment) next week. On Monday, students will take the English Language Arts exam and on Tuesday, they will complete the math exam.

The SBA is a practice MCAS test. Seven Hills simulates an authentic testing experience in order to familiarize the students with not only the content and format of the MCAS, but also the rigor of an extended, silent testing environment where students must work independently to show what they know.

Seven Hills will have the results of the SBA back before the winter break so that teachers can review responses with students and parents and adjust instruction accordingly to close any achievement gaps before our next SBA (February) and the MCAS (March and May).

MCAS is a high stakes exam in Massachusetts. High student performance not only benefits students by creating scholarship and higher education opportunities for them, but it also determines the viability of a school. It is critical that all students do their personal best in order for Seven Hills to meet the conditions of our probationary charter renewal.

As you know, a charter school renews its charter every five years. Since this is our sixteenth year of operation, we just completed our renewal process last year. Although our charter was renewed, it was done so with conditions. In order to remain open, we must show dramatic improvements on our MCAS exams. Our students in grades four through eight must progress at a rate higher than their peers across the state. This means that our students must have an SGP (student growth percentile) above 40% on both the ELA and math tests. (On last year's tests, the aggregate SGP for math was 53% and 37% for math.) Seven Hills also set goals to decrease the percentage of students failing math and increasing the performance of our ELL students.

Because we have partnered with the Learning First Foundation and the Greater Worcester Community Foundation to develop scholarship programs for our students, MCAS performance (and model citizenship and SLC - Student Learning Contract - grades) will also result in LFF merit scholar points, which can be redeemed for assistance with high school and college tuition. Encouraging your children to do their best every single day is an investment in their futures!

We know that we can do this! However, we can't do it without you. Here are a few tips for helping your children achieve:

- Make sure your children get enough sleep, eat properly, and get to school on time. Regular attendance is one predictor of academic success.
- Encourage your children to read. Parents, guardians, and siblings can share good books and discuss events to reinforce positive reading habits. Read with your child for a fun activity.
- Set times each day for study and homework.
- Provide your children with a quiet, well-lit, comfortable space to study which includes important supplies like paper, pens, pencils, calculators, rulers, a dictionary and a thesaurus.



- Require your children to record assignments and due dates in their agenda book.
- Check your children's homework to make sure it is done completely and work to the best of their ability.
- On the test day, encourage your children to do the best work possible and to have a positive attitude. Remind your children to listen to and read carefully all test taking directions. Ask questions if any directions are unclear. Remind your children to answer every question and leave nothing blank.
- It is important to reduce test anxiety for your children. Remember to talk about the test in a positive way and let your children know that you have confidence in their ability by focusing on their strengths.

After the testing period, it is important to talk with your children and their teachers to find out how they did. Review the test with your children and have your children complete related practice activities (class assignments, Study Island sessions) in order to improve performance.

Remember to regularly log on to Powerschool to review student grades and homework completion. Come to the next tech night for a refresher about how to access all of the great information and resources that are available online.

Everything that is online is available in hard copy form as well. Please notify your children's teachers to discuss the best way for you to keep in touch.

Krista Piazza, Superintendent

Early Learning Academy-Ms. Cox: As we get further into December, our first grade classes continue their study of World Cultures, Traditions, and Holidays. You may notice the color-themed dress up days on Wednesdays! Next week, students can dress up in blue, silver, and white to celebrate St. Lucia and Hanukkah. We are looking at maps and globes and identifying places of the world that celebrate. Utilizing top-down topic webs to organize main ideas of each tradition. If you celebrate these traditions and would like to come in to show-and-tell, please contact your child's teachers.

Kindergarten classes continue to study families. What makes a family? We are reading stories about different types of families. We are exploring different ways that families work and celebrate together. If you would like to come in to share your experiences, please contact your child's teacher.

Don't forget about our Winter Celebration Performance! It will be December 19, 2011, at 8:30am in the gym. The performance will be about one hour. We can't wait to see you!

Primary Academy-Ms. Ambrose: Poetry comes in many different forms. Poetry is a kind of writing, usually in verse. Poetry verse is set out in short lines with words put together in rhythm or rhyme or both. Poetry is about a writer sharing with the reader an experience or strong feelings. Poems are written with words chosen for their sounds and beauty as well as their meaning. This month, as we focus on poetry, spend time reading poetry to your child and discussing poetic elements.

A stanza is a group of lines in a poem. A **cinquain** is poem with a five line stanza. Try writing a cinquain about yourself.

Line 1 - your name	Ms. V
Line 2 - 2 words that describe you	Funny, great
Line 3 - 3 action words (verbs) that you do	Read, play, talk
Line 4 - 4 words that describe the way you feel	Happy. Excited, joyful, silly

Read the sentence in the box.

The children fell into formation—two on each side of her—and all took hands.

What does **formation** mean in the sentence?

- A). the way the children are lined up
- B). the speed the children are walking
- C). the height of the edge of the road
- D). the direction the road turns at the corner

Elementary Academy-Mrs. Nelson: As we continue our December focus on poetry, we invite you to explore **cinquain** poems. A cinquain poem has five lines. American poet Adelaide Crapsey invented the modern form, inspired by Japanese haiku and tanka. There are several variations of the modern form using different syllable patterns. Students, can you figure out the syllable pattern in the cinquain below? Check it with me or your teachers!

November Night by Adelaide Crapsey
Listen...
With faint dry sound,
Like steps of passing ghosts,
The leaves, frost-crisp'd, break from the trees
And fall.

Here is a way to create a simple cinquain created by Treena Murray

Line 1: One word- What you are talking about (noun)	Hamster
Line 2: Two words-Describing it (adjectives)	Cute, Soft
Line 3: Three words-Describing it (adjectives)	Fat, Noisy, Furry
Line 4: Four words-Describing it (adjectives)	Small, Colorful, Playful, Hungry
Line 5: One word-What you are talking about (noun)	Hamster

Give it a try and share it with your class!

Line1:.....
Line2:.....
Line3:.....
Line4:.....
Line5:.....

Junior Academy-Ms. Wright: As stated in a previous newsletter, our 8th graders elected class officers to be their leaders for the 2011-2012 school year. These students have been meeting weekly and surveying the Junior Academy to find out what the students are thinking and what their needs are at Seven Hills. They are also putting their thinking caps on to raise money for the 8th grade class end of the year trip. Some ideas that have been thought of are, candy cane messages before the holiday break, flowers for Valentine's Day, and some potential academic challenges/debates are in the works as well. Keep your eyes and ears open for what's to come.

Word of the Week: Last week's word of the week was *furtive*. The winner and person who best used this word in a sentence was **Kennedy Godwin**. His sentence was: *Jon made a furtive effort to steal snacks from the cupboard, but his mom caught him anyway.* This is the fifth week in a row that Kennedy has won. He needs some competition! I want to see more students participating in the weekly challenge AND writing amazing sentences.

This week's word is **gratitude**. Please research the definition and use this word in the most creative sentence possible, and place your responses in the envelope outside my office.

JA Masquerade Ball! The next 8th grade dance will be on December 16th, from 6:30-8:30. Tickets cost \$6 in advance and \$7 at the door. When you purchase your ticket from the main office, you will receive a mask to decorate and be eligible to win a prize for the best mask. Be as creative as possible. This is a black and/or white event. Best dressed prizes will be given out, one male and one female. Food and drinks will be sold at the event.

Remember to always be kind, safe and responsible and **MAKE** a great day!

THE COHEM CORNER:

There are great things happening here at Seven Hills and the holiday season is our chance to celebrate our students achievements. I am excited to announce that we have started a career speaker series and our students are learning about professional careers and the educational goals they need to reach them.

The goal of the speaker series is to develop our students potential to find their career goals, and focus on continuing to encourage the students to see collegiate studies as the next step after high school. We want students to see the results of earning their degree. We are going to compile a folder that has information from each presenter and information about each career as a resource for students to know about different career opportunities. These files will be kept in the library and my office as a tool for all students in the community.

The next **BIG THING:** We are rewarding our students who achieve 100% of all the standards mastered during the first trimester. These Junior Academy students will receive (2) tickets to the Holy Cross Basketball game, scheduled for December 22, 2011, at 7:00pm.

Throughout this trimester there is an opportunity for other students to attend college games for Holy Cross and Boston College. Some games may be televised as well. There will be more details to come regarding those dates, and how to win the tickets. We are excited to reward these students for their hard work and as a community we want to continue to strive to reach our goals of Kindergarten, to College, Careers and Beyond.

Congratulations to the following Junior Academy students: Lexus Asibey, Alberto Garcia, Genaro Lopez, Nicole Ramirez, Sheilyn Rodriguez, Henrique Sobrinho, Afia Somiah, Alivia Burns, Alix Chesnulavich and Nathan Paris.

Keep up the good work!
Mr. Lee

Holiday Bazaar- ONE DAY ONLY!

On **Thursday, December 14, 2011**, the SHCPS Parent Guild will sponsor the Fourteenth annual **Holiday Bazaar** for the children at the school. This will be an opportunity for your children to do some holiday shopping on their own.

Each child's participation is voluntary. If you do not want your child to participate, please notify your child's classroom teacher. Each teacher will be assigned to a specific time period for their class to shop. If you would like to accompany your child to the bazaar, please feel free to ask his/her teacher what time their class will be shopping.

Before the bazaar, please decide with your child whether they can purchase gifts for only their parents, or whether they may purchase items for other family members and friends.

The prices of the items offered will range from \$1.00 to \$8.00.

The annual reenactment of the Boston tea party will be held at the The Old South Meetinghouse in Boston at 5:30pm. The Reenactment allows participants to experience a courageous demonstration of principled political activism.

Sunday, Dec 11, 2011

Multi-Cultural Celebrations-December 19! All students in grades K-3 will participate in a multi-cultural celebration on December 19. Performance groups from grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 will be performing. There are four different celebrations. The times for the celebrations are as follows:

-8:30: Kindergarten and 1st Grades (All students perform 1 song)

-10:00: 2nd and 3rd Grades (All students perform 1 song)

-1:40: JA (Performance Groups and Selected Students perform)

-3:00: 4th and 5th grade (Performance Groups only)

All students from grades K-3, please try to dress in the clothes as follows for their performances:

Mr. Chamberlain's, Miss Murphy's, Ms. Berrios', Mr. Fernandez and Ms. Walsh's Classes-Authentic African Clothes or Red, Green, Yellow or Black solid shirts with school pants or jeans (African Culture)

Mrs. Artim's, Ms. Delorge's, Ms. Flanagan's, and Miss Vilanueva's Classes-Wear school uniforms and bring winter scarves, mittens or gloves to wear. (Winter Season)

Mrs. Slarsky's, Mrs. Czyzewski's, Ms. Kelly's and Mrs. Burn-Yanis' Classes-Solid Yellow, Orange, Green or red shirts with school pants or jeans (Mexican Culture)

Ms. Forbes, Mr. Novakowski's, Ms. Fogarty's and Mrs. Padden's Classes-Solid red, white or green shirts with school pants or jeans (Christmas)

Miss Sogn, Ms. Walsh's Class-Bring shorts and short sleeve shirts to change into for Hawaiian performance.

Ms. Manoli's, Ms. Lind's Ms. Turner's and Mrs. Neely's Class-Red shirts with jeans or school pants.

All 4th and 5th grade performance groups only may dress up.

Show Choir and Stomp Teams-Team Uniforms

Hope you all can come to the celebrations!



Be kind.

Be safe.

Be responsible.